

FOOD
It's scratch against semi-homemade in the ultimate cookoff 8A

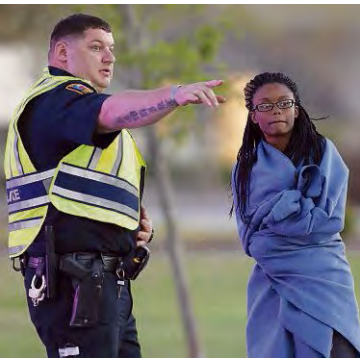


SPORTS
Hurney learning, trying not to repeat mistakes
Scott Fowler, 1B



The Charlotte Observer

CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM



A FedEx worker talks to a police officer after evacuation from a FedEx distribution center where a package exploded Tuesday.

Explosion reported at Austin Goodwill store

BY PAUL J. WEBER
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Associated Press

AUSTIN, TEXAS
Emergency teams were responding Tuesday night to another reported explosion in Texas' capital, this one at a Goodwill store in the southern part of the city.
It was apparently the seventh bomb and sixth explosion in less than four weeks in or near Austin.
In a tweet, the Austin Police Department urged residents to avoid the area. Austin-Travis County EMS said there had been reports of at least one person injured, though it was not immediately clear how serious the injuries were.
It came as investigators who have pursued a suspected serial bomber terrorizing Austin for weeks uncovered what seemed like valuable new leads in the case.
Even before the report of the Goodwill blast, it had already been a busy day for authorities. Before dawn Tuesday, a bomb inside a package exploded around 1 a.m. as it passed along a conveyor belt at a FedEx shipping

SEE AUSTIN, 12A

Officers keep leaving NC's toughest prisons



JOHN D. SIMMONS jsimmons@charlotteobserver.com

In January, the vacancy rate at Lanesboro Correctional Institution, southeast of Charlotte, jumped to 37 percent – a significant increase over the previous year. Serious staffing problems persist at Lanesboro and other prisons, despite efforts to recruit and retain officers.

■ Dangerous staff shortages have worsened inside some of North Carolina's toughest prisons. At Lanesboro Correctional Institution, more than 1 of every 3 officer positions was vacant in January.

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Dangerous staff shortages have worsened inside some of North Carolina's toughest prisons, despite recent state efforts to address the problem.
At Lanesboro Correctional Institution, a maximum-security prison that has been plagued by violence, more than 1 of every 3 officer positions was vacant in January, new data shows. The vacancies there have climbed sharply over the past year.
Prison leaders have tried temporary measures to maintain order. They've required many officers to work overtime, which

can lead to burnout and fatigue.
And they've even forced some officers to drive 35 miles to work extra shifts at Lanesboro, southeast of Charlotte. But they scrapped that plan after officers at medium-custody Albemarle Correctional Institution complained about having to work at Lanesboro on their days off.
"They don't want to go," Rep. Justin Burr, a Republican whose district includes Albemarle, told a legislative panel last week.
"They're retiring. They're quitting. They don't want to put their lives in danger."
The overall officer vacancy rate at Albemarle Correctional has more than tripled – from 7 percent in January 2017 to 25 percent a year later, state records show.

Now, prison leaders are trying a different approach at Lanesboro: They're sending in members of the Prison Emergency Response Team, which is made up of officers from various prisons.
About 37 percent of positions at Lanesboro were vacant in January, up from about 22 percent a year earlier, according to N.C. Department of Public Safety records.
One officer at Lanesboro, who asked not to be named because she fears retribution, said some officers are working nine straight days or consecutive 16-hour shifts. The prison is so short-staffed, she said, that two officers are sometimes left in charge of overseeing 200 inmates in the cafeteria. In the past, one former officer said, there were twice that many

SEE PRISONS, 3A

“FEWER STAFF MEANS THERE IS A HIGHER CHANCE OF A RIOT, A HIGHER CHANCE OF AN ASSAULT. AND IF THERE IS (AN INCIDENT), YOU DON'T HAVE THE NUMBERS TO GO IN THERE. INSTEAD OF STORMING THEM, YOU'RE WAITING FOR PEOPLE TO SHOW UP.”
Officer at Alexander Correctional Institution who asked not to be named

Tillis, NC Republicans paid \$345K to data firm now banned from Facebook

BY BRIAN MURPHY
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WASHINGTON
North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis and the state's Republican Party paid \$345,000 to a data company that is now under scrutiny for its use of personal information about Facebook users.
Cambridge Analytica used the personal Facebook data of more

than 50 million users, acquired through a third party, to create profiles of prospective voters and "microtarget" persuasive voting messages to them, according to a whistleblower who told his story to The Guardian and The New York Times.
Cambridge Analytica also worked for the Donald Trump campaign, earning more than \$5.9 million in 2016, according to Federal Election Commission filings, and for the Brexit cam-

paign in the United Kingdom.
Two years earlier, the data company helped Tillis, a Republican, defeat Democratic incumbent Kay Hagan. It was at the time the most expensive U.S. Senate race in history.
Cambridge Analytica put a page about Tillis' race on its website, touting its work and listing the race as a case study.
"Our telecanvassing program contacted 123,138 individuals, resulting in an increase in turn-

out of 12.57% among those called, which is equivalent to over 15,478 voters," Cambridge Analytica says.
Tillis won by 48,511 votes.
Cambridge Analytica's data told Tillis to highlight Hagan's absences on the Senate Armed Services Committee to reach a certain group of voters. Tillis hammered Hagan in ads and debates on her absences and the rise of ISIS and jumped on her acknowledgment that she skipped a national security meeting to attend a fundraiser.
"We were able to design and deploy messages tailored to

SEE TILLIS, 2A



ALEX BRANDON AP

Cambridge Analytica put a page about Thom Tillis' Senate race on its website, touting its work and listing the race as a case study.

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